

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION AT MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE

In a recent decision, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) revoked the accreditation of Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia. This has led to many questions by students and families about the status of students' financial aid, transfer of credits and aid to other institutions, and related issues. This document will respond to these questions as thoroughly as possible, given what is known at this time.

What is the current status of my federal student aid?

SACS' action does not yet affect your eligibility to receive federal student aid.

When a school loses its accreditation, it remains eligible for federal student aid through the accreditation appeals process. Morris Brown has indicated that the college intends to appeal the decision by SACS; therefore, the school is currently eligible to participate in the federal student aid programs. These programs include Pell Grants, Stafford loans, and the three Campus-Based programs: Perkins Loans, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and Federal Work-Study.

If a school fails to file a timely appeal with SACS or if the appeal is denied, its eligibility to participate in the federal student aid programs would end on the date of SACS' written notification. If this occurs, a student would not be able to receive federal student aid to attend this school.

What happens if SACS denies my school's appeal in the middle of the term?

If a school files a timely appeal with SACS and the accrediting agency does not render a final decision until mid-term – or within a payment period – the college may be able to honor certain financial aid commitments through the end of the spring term (2003). Eligibility for the spring 2003 term will depend upon many factors and actions that will occur in the next few months; students and their families should stay tuned for updates on this question.

If I decide to transfer to another school for the spring semester, how will my federal student aid be affected?

Federal student aid is based upon both student and institutional eligibility. If your new school participates in the federal student aid programs, you may be eligible for half of your original award, given that Morris Brown operates on the semester system with two payment periods per academic year. Call 1-800-433-3243 to inquire about an institution's eligibility in federal student aid programs.

If I transfer to another school for the spring semester, do I have to fill out a new FAFSA (Federal Application for Federal Student Aid)?

No, not if you have already filled out a FAFSA for the 2002-2003 academic year and have received a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR). In that case, you would simply ask the school to which you are transferring to obtain a copy of the Institutional Student Aid Report, commonly referred to as an ISIR. However, there may be additional paperwork and aid applications required by the transfer school. Please contact the financial aid office of any prospective institution to inquire about their particular requirements.

Helpful hints if you transfer to another school:

- Gather all relevant paperwork, including high school transcripts; tax forms used to fill out the FAFSA; the Student Aid Report; other documentation submitted to the admissions office or financial aid office of your current institution; any verification documents, award letters, promissory notes signed; and account summaries of charges/payments at your current institution.
- Follow all procedures at your current institution for officially withdrawing from the school. In most cases, institutions require written notice by the student that he or she plans to withdraw; schools may have additional requirements. Contact the registrar's office at your current school to ensure that you properly carry out the formal withdrawal process. This will help ensure that you receive the proper aid and any refunds to which you may be entitled.

The deadline for applying to other schools for the spring semester has passed. Do I have any options?

It appears that a number of public higher education institutions in the state are offering admission deadline waivers for potential transfer students. For more information, contact the Registrar's office at Morris Brown or at the school(s) you are interested in attending.

Will my credit hours earned transfer if I decide to go to another school?

You must contact a prospective institution and work with that institution on the acceptance of any hours earned at Morris Brown. Policies about transferring credit hours vary significantly from college to college. You may wish to contact more than one prospective institution to determine where you would receive more credit for the hours already earned.

In order to transfer, I need an academic transcript. What options exist to get an academic transcript?

Most colleges and universities require you to be in good financial standing prior to the release of an academic transcript, including such payments as outstanding library fees and parking violations. Neither federal nor state regulations govern academic transcripts; schools set their own policies. If your institution will not release an academic transcript, your only option is to work with that institution on satisfactory arrangements to come into good financial standing.

Morris Brown College has indicated that it will release academic transcripts regardless of any outstanding balance issues with students or parents.

What if Morris Brown closes? What are my options?

It is possible that a teach-out, which provides for the completion of a program of study, may be arranged if the college were to close. In this situation, the accrediting agency, state governing body and the closing institution work with other local colleges to allow students to complete their studies at another institution. A teach-out is only an option when a college closes.

Federal regulations provide for the discharge of federal student loans when a student's educational institution closes precipitously and the student has not completed his or her program of study. However, under Closed School Loan Discharge procedures, you cannot transfer any credits to a new institution **and** have your prior loan obligations discharged. Thus, a student who seeks a Closed School Loan Discharge would lose **all** academic credits, plus the years of work that have gone into those credits.

As stated previously, institutions have discretion about whether to accept credits from other schools and school policies on transferring credits vary widely. Therefore, weigh this option very carefully.

All of this information is provided in a **CLOSED SCHOOL FACT SHEET** published separately by the U.S. Department of Education. You may access this information via the Internet at:

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/closedschool.jsp>

I received a letter several months ago stating that my loans were guaranteed. What has happened to those loan proceeds? What about other types of federal aid, such as a Federal Pell Grant?

Morris Brown is on what is called the reimbursement system of payment. This means that it cannot disburse federal aid to students until it receives U.S. Department of Education (the Department) approval. Department approval depends on whether Morris Brown submits complete and accurate records to the Department to show that it calculated the aid properly for each student and "earned" the funds. The Department generally reviews these records within 30 days. After the Department has approved your student-specific financial aid records, a letter is mailed to the lender authorizing it to

release funds to the college, and the Department releases Pell Grant and other federal aid funds to the college as well.

The Department is committed to working with Morris Brown College to process federal student aid awarded for the Fall 2002 semester. To date, Morris Brown College has submitted only a fraction of its student aid files. Therefore, the College must address any questions related to whether or not your student-specific records have been submitted to the Department for review.

Prior to inquiring about the status of your records, you should review your award letters and bills for the amount of federal student aid awarded and posted to your account.

To inquire about the status of your file and whether or not it has been submitted to the Department for review, ***contact Mattie Sherrell, Morris Brown College, at (404) 739-1562.***

When will I get my refund check if I am owed one?

When a student's federal student aid award exceeds institutional charges, it creates what is called a "credit balance." However, many students may call this a refund because the funds are actually returned to the student for indirect costs such as transportation, living expenses, or childcare, for example.

Credit balances must be paid within 14 days of being created. However, because Morris Brown College is currently on the reimbursement system of payment for financial aid to students (see explanation above), student aid cannot be disbursed – and credit balances returned to students – unless and until the student file has been submitted by the college and approved by the Department. With credit balances, as with aid awards, students must contact the college directly for information on whether or not student records have been submitted to the Department for review. ***Contact: Mattie Sherrell, Morris Brown College, at (404) 739-1562.***

[Any additional questions may be directed to the Department's Atlanta Regional Office at \(404\) 562-6315.](#)